

115TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 775

To streamline the R-1 religious worker visa petition process.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MARCH 30, 2017

Mr. HATCH introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred
to the Committee on the Judiciary

A BILL

To streamline the R-1 religious worker visa petition process.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

4 This Act may be cited as the “Religious Worker Visa
5 Improvement Act”.

6 SEC. 2. R-1 RELIGIOUS WORKER VISA PETITIONS.

7 Section 214 of the Immigration and Nationality Act
8 (8 U.S.C. 1184) is amended by adding at the end the fol-
9 lowing:

10 “(s) VISAS OF NONIMMIGRANTS DESCRIBED IN SEC-
11 TION 101(a)(15)(R).—

1 “(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in para-
2 graph (2), a consular officer may not issue a visa
3 and the Secretary of Homeland Security may not
4 grant status to any alien under section
5 101(a)(15)(R) until the Secretary has approved a
6 petition filed on behalf of such alien.

7 “(2) BLANKET PETITION AUTHORIZED.—Not-
8 withstanding paragraph (1), a petitioner who has
9 satisfied the requirements under paragraph (3) may
10 file a blanket petition, in lieu of individual petitions,
11 on behalf of aliens who meet the eligibility require-
12 ments under paragraph (4).

13 “(3) PETITIONER REQUIREMENTS.—A peti-
14 tioner satisfies the requirements under this para-
15 graph if—

16 “(A) the petitioner has an established pro-
17 gram for temporary, uncompensated missionary
18 work in the United States that is part of a
19 broader international missionary work program;

20 “(B) participation in the missionary work
21 described in subparagraph (A) is an established
22 element of religious development in the peti-
23 tioner’s religious denomination;

1 “(C) the petitioner provides formal training to its missionaries that is incidental to their
2 missionary service;

4 “(D) the petitioner has established a financial support system that reasonably ensures
5 that its missionaries will not become public
6 charges during their missionary service; and

8 “(E) at least 1,000 individual petitions for
9 nonimmigrant religious workers previously filed
10 by the petitioner under section 101(a)(15)(R)
11 have been approved by the Secretary of Home-
12 land Security.

13 “(4) ELIGIBILITY FOR INCLUSION IN BLANKET
14 PETITION.—An alien meets the requirements under
15 this paragraph if the alien—

16 “(A) is described in section 101(a)(15)(R);

17 “(B) has been accepted into a missionary
18 program described in paragraph (3)(A); and

19 “(C) will perform missionary work at a loca-
20 tion listed in the blanket-petition approval no-
21 tice.

22 “(5) LIMITATION.—

23 “(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of
24 Homeland Security may only include, in its ap-
25 probation of a blanket petition, locations of mis-

1 sionary service for which the Secretary has pre-
2 viously conducted a site inspection in connection
3 with an individual petition for a religious work-
4 er.

5 “(B) DEFINED TERM.—In this paragraph,
6 the term ‘location of missionary service’ means
7 a specific worksite or a geographic area with
8 specific boundaries. If the location of mis-
9 sionary service is a geographical area with spe-
10 cific boundaries, the location shall include a
11 head office or facility that can be reasonably
12 subject to a site inspection.

13 “(6) LIST OF AUTHORIZED LOCATIONS OF MIS-
14 SIONARY SERVICE.—

15 “(A) NOTICE.—When the Secretary of
16 Homeland Security approves a blanket petition
17 filed under paragraph (2), the Secretary shall
18 issue a notice to the petitioner containing a list
19 of the locations of missionary service authorized
20 under the blanket petition. Such approval shall
21 remain valid unless revoked by the Secretary of
22 Homeland Security for good cause shown.

23 “(B) AMENDMENT.—A petitioner under
24 this subsection may file a petition at any time
25 seeking to amend the list of locations of mis-

1 sionary service that were previously author-
2 ized.”.

